



*Advocating for excellence in Respiratory Therapy*

## **POSITION STATEMENT**

### **Baccalaureate Degree as the Entry-to-Practice Requirement for Respiratory Therapy**

Comprehensive surveys and a body of research provide support for the profession's belief concerning the need for access to baccalaureate programs for Respiratory Therapists. Findings reveal that the evolution of Respiratory Therapy over the years has created a demand for a broader set of abilities and attributes at a post-diploma level that would increase both the quality and safety of patient care. However, there is not sufficient evidence to support the movement by the profession towards having a baccalaureate degree as the entry-to-practice requirement for the profession.

The profession believes that the most workable model for degree education of Respiratory Therapists is one that serves as an adjunct to the current three year base program. Prior to entry into a "degree completion" program, individuals will already possess both the knowledge and skills required to practice as Respiratory Therapists.

Upon completion of a degree program, the Respiratory Therapist will also possess:

- Skills in research methods and statistics sufficient to allow them to participate in and/or evaluate published research in Respiratory Therapy and related fields;
- A background in the social sciences sufficient to provide the research and theoretical underpinning of practice models, professional roles etc;
- Knowledge of health issues and policy sufficient to place Respiratory Therapy within the context of the overall health care system;
- Sufficient breadth and depth of analytical skills required of a university graduate with the result that they will be more self reliant, more creative and better exhibit critical thinking and problem solving in their practice.

The profession supports access to degree completion education for Respiratory Therapists as an effective option for developing clinical leadership and increasing our engagement in an evidence-based approach to practice.

*Approved October 30, 2008*